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# United States Department of Agriculture,

BUREAU OF PLANT INDUSTRY,

Forage Crop Investigations,

WASHINGTON, D. C.

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## PINK KAFIR (*Andropogon sorghum*).

Pink kafir is a recently introduced variety of sorghum from South Africa. It is so closely related to the other kafirs that it is considered a cross between the Red and Blackhull varieties. It is distinguished from them by larger seeds and pinkish colored heads, which are looser and perhaps more club shaped than the Blackhull kafir. Otherwise the plant, in habit of growth, leafiness, sweetness, and juiciness of stem, is similar to the Blackhull variety. It is not at the present time recommended over the other kafirs, but on account of the large size of the grains and the heavy seed yield it will equal, and possibly excel, them. It is undoubtedly adapted to the kafir region and thus far has given better results than Blackhull or Red kafir.

**Planting.**—The seed should be planted about three or four weeks later than the season for Indian corn, medium-early plantings usually giving the best results. It may be planted either flat or in a lister furrow. The latter method is preferred in sandy sections because it affords protection to the young plants during the windy spring. Pink kafir is usually planted in rows 3 feet apart, so that the crop may be cultivated. At this distance it requires about 6 to 8 pounds per acre. This will give a fairly thick and regular planting and a very uniform, even crop. If seeded less thickly, the plants become too coarse and uneven.

**Cultivation.**—Pink kafir should be cultivated much the same as Indian corn. It may be given two or three harrowings while the plants are small, and as soon as sufficient growth is made the crop should be given a fairly deep and thorough cultivation. Two or three subsequent and shallower cultivations are desirable.

**Harvesting.**—For the best quality and yield of fodder and grain the crop should be cut in the late dough stage. If planted in 3-foot rows for fodder, the crop should be cut with a corn harvester and put in shocks of 40 to 50 bundles each. If the crop is planted solely for the grain yield, it should be allowed to stand in the field until the heads are thoroughly mature. It can be cut and put in shocks, to be headed and stored later. If the crop is to be headed standing, it should be allowed to stand until the stem at the base of the head is dry, and no longer. This usually takes from two to four weeks after the grain is mature. In case the heads are cut by hand from the standing stalks the remaining part of the crop is best pastured in the field.

**Feeding.**—While there has been no feeding test conducted thus far with this variety it is considered to be equal to either of the other kafirs for feeding purposes. It is relished by horses, hogs, and cattle, and can be fed in the same manner as the other kafir varieties.

**Suggestions.**—Plantings of this seed should be compared with the Blackhull kafir as to quality and yield of forage per acre and as to the uniformity of the field. Results should be carefully reported to this Department. As in all sorghums the rate of seeding has a marked influence on the evenness and yield of the crop, every farmer should make three different seedings on the same date, planting the seeds 4, 8, and 12 inches apart in the drill row. In this way he can determine the best rate of seeding for his locality.

**Seed selection.**—Every farmer should select his own seed for planting. This is best done in the field as soon as the first heads are mature. Only medium dwarf early plants that have no stools or side branches should be selected, and for the best forage these must have very sweet, juicy stems. They should also bear from 14 to 16 leaves. The head should be club shaped, and not pointed at the tip or butt. Careful selections for this type will not only increase the yield and uniformity of the crop, but will materially raise its quality as a feed. Selections should always be made near the center of the field, or at least 100 yards from any other variety, as the sorghums cross very freely. Care should also be taken to remove the other sorts of sorghum that may be in the patch from which selections are to be made. This will give a pure, uniform strain and a much more desirable crop.

A. B. CONNER,  
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JANUARY, 1909.

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